

No First-Use Initiative on Nuclear Arms Urged

The immense pioneering success of the initiatives for a nuclear freeze—victory in all but one of the eight states where they appeared on the ballot—has set the stage for the next logical step: ballot initiatives in 1984 for no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

Every person who voted for a nuclear freeze in the 1982 elections will certainly vote for a no-first-use initiative in the 1984 elections.

No-first-use follows logically from the freeze because the existing level at which the nuclear arsenals would be frozen would still leave more than enough weapons to annihilate all humankind. What is therefore needed, especially between the two nuclear superpowers, is agreement that neither one will be first to use nuclear weapons, because if one does, the other will certainly do the same.

The only long-term preventive of nuclear *omnicide* is a negotiated and verifiable abolition of the *omnicidal* weapons. But, while such negotiations are in process, there must be agreement that these weapons will not be used by either side.

If things are called by their right names, the option of first-use of nuclear weapons is the option of ending the human world. To reject this option is the minimum requirement of human sanity.

At the U.N. Special Session on Disarmament last June the government of the U.S.S.R. publicly pledged that it would not be first to use nuclear weapons. Our government must not hesitate to make the same pledge.

Nothing would be lost by making such a pledge, but everything might be lost by not making it. The obvious reason is that our continued refusal might move the Soviets to do to us what we would be moved to do to them if we had made the pledge and they had refused; that is, beat them to the nuclear punch.

The question of "trusting the Russians" does not arise in this pledge because each side retains its weapons, and there is nothing to verify save mutual sanity. If the Soviets, in spite of their pledge, be-

came insane enough to make first use of their nuclear weapons, we would be as free as we are now to make use of ours. But the question of our sanity does arise so long as we refuse to pledge no-first-use.

The campaign to put no-first-use on the ballot in 1984 must start now in order to continue the momentum that carried the 1982 freeze initiatives to victory. Undoubtedly in 1984 further freeze initiatives will be brought to the ballot, especially in states that were not covered in 1982. These will be helped and strengthened by the initiative for no-first-use, a step whose time has now come.

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